SOME GREAT MASTERS OF BLACK AND WHITE

Forain, Steinlen and Lepere— The Late Frank Duveneck

By Royal Cortissoz

When Degas died one of the stories told about him was to the effect that he kept a polished mahogany table in his apartment solely for the reception of his friend Forain's designs. As these came out in "Figaro" the old painter hailed them with loving enthusiasm. On his walls there hung some of Forain's original drawings, held in no less honor than the souvenirs hanging beside them of Ingres, who was the idol of Degas. Just what was it that so stirred the great modern exemplar of pure draftsmanship? The question may be answered by a visit to the Arden gallery, where works by Forain and Steinlen are on exhibition, loaned from the private collection of Mr. A. E. Gallatin. There are drawings, lithographs (including posters) and etchings. The material shown is slight, compared with the mass produced by the two artists, but it is insufficient. One may see here clearly enough why Degas admired Forain.

Satire and Sentiment

It was, in a nutshell, because line in the hands of the famous satirist became so much more than an instrument of satire, because it was expressive of Forain's personality and had in it the magic of style. Mr. Gallatin, in his preface to the catalogue, speaks of "the living lines, the amazing simplicity of the drawing entitled 'Au Café,' which has already become a classic in the annals of black and white." The truth is here in no wise overstated. There is, indeed, nothing better in the whole range of modern black and white. But we would stress the point that what makes Forain a classic is not alone the vitality and the simplicity of his line, but its powerful originality. That, we imagine, is what appealed to Degas. To be simple in style is not necessarily to be unique. Caran d'Ache had simplicity, so had Phil May, so had that genius amongst English draftsmen, Charles Keene. To express a great deal with a few deft strokes of the pen has never been a rare gift, nor is it one in itself implying high artistic inspiration. That only appears when the draftsman is, at the core, a great artist, when into his swift, stenographic touches he pours a natural eloquence and distinction. Forain has done this. Like every master, he has had, of course, his good and bad moments. It would be a mistake to regard everything in the present exhibition, for example, as confirming the judgment of Degas. But at his best, as in the café sketch already cited or in "The Fisherman," which we reproduce from another source, Forain is incomparable for the delicate artistic charm which he adds to his prodigious simplicity.

Steinlen, his companion on this occasion, owes the kindred celebrity which he enjoys to merits which are, nevertheless, of a somewhat different order. His fame has its roots in the character of a locality. Despite his essentially Parisian accent, there is still a kind of universal stamp upon Forain; his style is so brilliant as to range him apart from a school or a period. Steinlen has never been so much the master of his surroundings. Indeed, his environment has in a sense mastered him. He is the draftsman, specifically, of Montmartre, the pictorial laureate of a clearly marked part of Paris, the interpreter of its types, its movement, its atmosphere. Where Forain is the Balzac of the whole *Comédie Humaine*, Steinlen is the Balzac of a single neighborhood. It is true that with so many Frenchmen he has been lifted by the war into a larger and purer air. His military subjects show this. His poilu is no mere Montmartrois, but has a grave pathos, nay, a grandeur, of which previously we had not known Steinlen to be capable. But the characteristic Steinlen, the Steinlen of a long career, is the man of local color, of a distinctly urban picturesqueness, of the humor of a *quartier*, a gay *quartier*, with its seamy side constantly showing through.

The nature of his preoccupation has reacted upon his line, which if not precisely heavy is at all events wanting in the rapid, clean-cut elegance which we recognize in Forain. On the other hand, it is worthy of Forain in its original savor, and in its personal quality there is even an ingredient which the greater draftsman might envy. This is a certain human friendliness. Forain gleams like a diamond, and he is as hard. Beneath his superficial brutality, the truth-seeking instinct which leaves him unafraid of ugliness, there is in Steinlen something like tenderness. Note the gentle sympathy with which he draws cats and dogs. It helps to explain why his hard-featured washerwomen, his shabby street singers, the hunger-pinched and often dissipated types with which he is generally concerned, are never repellent, but, on the contrary, have something winning about them. Forain would triumph by virtue of his line alone. Steinlen is unimaginable without his searching, sometimes ruthless, and always intensely human sentiment.

Auguste Lepere

While we are speaking of those French masters of black and white we cannot forebear paying tribute to one who has lately died in Paris, Auguste Lepere. He worked to some extent in color. He was painter and illustrator, etcher and wood engraver, a versatile type if ever there was one. But success in black and white sums up the achievement of his long, busy life. He began as a wood engraver, and as a young man was employed by "Le Monde Illustré" to translate the designs of Vierge. When that consummate draftsman suffered the stroke of paralysis which temporarily interrupted his labors it was Lepere who took his place and, with the first drawing that he made for the purpose, attained a rank of his own. We cannot pretend in a brief passage to survey even a province of the realm he conquered. He illustrated innumerable authors. He was forever depicting his beloved Paris, making full dress studies of Notre Dame or drawing lightly touched vignettes of street life and casual scenes along the Seine. His landscape etchings fill a generous category by themselves. But, above all, we delight to recall the Lepere of the "Revue Illustre," who was not only an illustrator but a deviser of perfect decorations, headpieces and tailpieces which used to seem pretty nearly the best justification of that excellent magazine's existence.

The influence of Vierge counted in these vivid drawings of his. Also one felt in him, as an engraver, a familiarity with Dürer and the early Germans generally. But the final effect was always his own; the grain of his style was untouched by external influences. It was hardly a great style. Again we revert to Forain and his gemlike perfection. Lepere never quite reached the easy authority of his flashing contemporary, was never so sure of what to omit. Sometimes, especially in his etchings, his line is weak, redundant and, on occasion, meaningless. In his natural *metier*, as a black and white designer pure and simple, he was more evenly successful. Then, too, like Steinlen, he put humanity into his work and developed a most beguiling charm. His official eulogists in Paris will call him, after the good French fashion, illustrious. Possibly the epithet will stick. But the disinterested collector, turning over the relics of Lepere in his portfolio, not only formally etched and engraved plates but fragments rescued from some periodical, will reckon him amongst the artists whom he has first admired and then found lovable.

Duveneck

The status in American art of the late Frank Duveneck is undoubtedly unique. He painted numerous pictures, all of them worth while, yet there is something about his repute suggesting that of the poet who lives by virtue of a single masterpiece. That is to say, having struck twelve, Duveneck stopped. Having demonstrated that he knew how to paint superlatively well, that he could make his little stir in the world, he was content to drop from view. For that is literally what happened to him. His friends found him an inspiration down to the day of his death, and to his pupils in Cincinnati he was helpful in his later years as he was long ago to his "boys" in Munich, Florence and Venice. But as an outstanding figure he ended as he began, the painter of divers canvases dated twenty and thirty years ago. The great merit of these was that they were truly "painter-like" in a period during which most American artists were only beginning to learn what the term meant. It means, of course, giving paint, as paint, its full value. It means the adroit manipulation of paint for its own sake, leaving subject, as such, to take care of itself. In this intelligent and enthusiastic exploitation of technique, which was to do more than anything else to reconstruct the American school in the late seventies and all through the eighties, Duveneck played a compelling part. Some of the cleverest men we ever had, like Chase and Twachtman, received precious impetus from his influence.

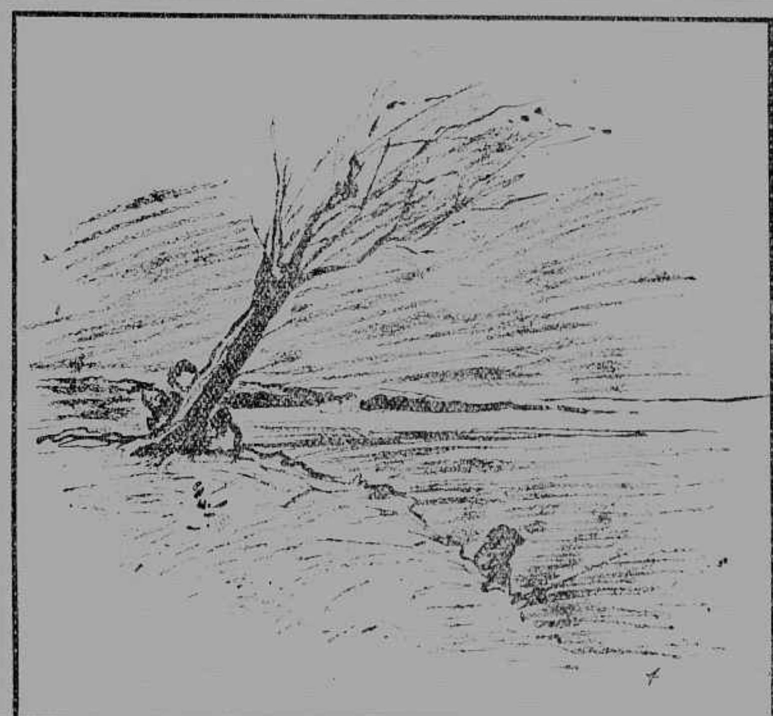
He brought to our technique a new lease of life, set his disciples to thinking in true painter fashion about problems which had too long been subordinated to the glorification of subject. When you studied under Duveneck you learned anew old secrets of modelling and brushwork, you became—unless you were a hopeless duffer, in which case he knew how to get rid of you with neatness and dispatch—an ardent and skilful craftsman, rejoicing in nothing so much as the sheer fascination of your craft. At the San Francisco exhibition, where a room was hung with his pictures, a special medal testified to the honor in which his fellow artists hold him. And the pictures made it plain to the public why he was held in such esteem professionally. They were robust, vigorous portraits, Rembrandtesque in their richly toned realism. They had the defects of their qualities. If Duveneck knew how to paint he did not know how to escape from the shadow of the old masters. Rembrandt and Hals, who largely taught him. He took over from them too much both as regards style and tonality. They cultivated in him too confiding a faith in what Manet used to call 'brown sauce.' Above all they blinded him to the magic of light and air. He gave Twachtman, as we noted in this place last Sunday, an invaluable training, but the younger man knew better than to pause where Duveneck left off. Twachtman really commenced there, and, with the aid of sunlight, taking a leaf from Monet's book, he painted pictures which, besides being fine in themselves, are in harmony with the modern progressive movement. Duveneck's failure to advance in the same way will always be a mystery. When, on the death of his wife, he turned from painting to sculpture, fashioning the beautiful recumbent figure which lies upon her grave in Italy, it seemed as if he had pushed his talent as a painter from him forever. It is to be regretted. Yet, we cannot be sure that if he had persisted he would have emerged from the penumbra of "brown sauce" and treacherous bitumen in which his best work was done. His springtime, while it lasted, was complete, and, we believe, the full expression of all that was really characteristic in him. He had his say. With all his limitations it was enough to make his place secure.

Modernist Sculpture

At the Bourgeois gallery there is an exhibition of sculpture akin to that of painting at the Montross gallery, which we traversed last week. That is to say, the contributors are mostly "advanced" types, bent upon expressing themselves in their own way. There is, however, a difference to be noted. Except for Mr. Robert Laurent, who carves two pieces of wood into gracefully curved forms and then naively labels them "Flames" and "Eclosion," those extremists are careful not to be too extreme. They are willing, for one thing, that sculpture should look more or less like sculpture. In one case, indeed—and it is the most interesting in the show—we have to reckon not so much with a man of "new ideas" as with a man who has permitted himself some liberties which he does not ordinarily take with his art. The result is delightful. This sanely adventurous sculptor is Mr. Stirling Calder.

The admirable work by which he has long been known has about it the staid atmosphere of academic sculpture. In the little pieces he has sent to this show he throws convention overboard, bids farewell to his accustomed "manner" and seems simply to play with form under the pressure of the mood happening to visit him. He sketches a recumbent figure, "The Woman," and in a small statuette conveys an impression of having come under Michael Angelo's spell—and of having captured something of its massy grandeur. He models his "Tragic Figures," a group likewise on a small scale, and, without making the meaning of his subject altogether plain, yet makes us feel its tragic emotion. So his "Seated Athlete" has, prominently, the charm of life, observed with imaginative fervor, modelled with the skill that kindles into style. Can all this be gained by the simple process of taking a vacation from one's daily habit? Then there is many an accomplished artist of our day whom we would like to see turn modernist. If they followed Mr. Calder's example they would rob the designation of all its horror. But he is the only member of the company at the Bourgeois gallery who moves us to this observation.

The exhibitors in general are not, we repeat, as eccentric as their brethren in paint. There are, in fact, virtues of expressiveness in the bronzes of Mr. Cecil B. Howard, and clever traits in Mr. Arthur Lee's nude "Gerda," as there are in the animal subjects by Miss Grace M. Johnson and Mr. Hunt Diederich. But there is too much in the exhibition of the straining after effect which is most startlingly signalized in the lumpy nudes of Mr. Gaston Lachaise and their chunky companions by Miss Florence G. Lucius. Modernism as a freakish *tour de force* is no more ingratiating in sculpture than it is in painting.



THE FISHERMAN
(From the drawing by Forain)

AU CAFE
(From the drawing by Forain)

Random Impressions In Current Exhibitions

To the programme outlined in The Tribune a fortnight ago, suggesting that the damage done by Germany to works of art in Belgium and France might be in part balanced by the distribution among the Allies of works of art now in German galleries, Mr. Childe Hassam would append a clause imposing one more duty upon the Hun. It would compel him to erect in the Sieges-Allee at Berlin a monumental portrait of Mr. William Randolph Hearst.

The Museum of French Art, which was founded in New York in 1911, has prospered since that time and has so far extended its ministrations as to feel justified in hoping for a building of its own. For the benefit of its fund for the furtherance of this laudable object it is holding in its Fifth Avenue rooms a loan exhibition of French art of the periods of Louis XV and Louis XVI. The space is limited, but the diminutive nature of many of the objects has permitted an uncommon representative display, which has been arranged with uncommon good taste. Paintings are shown, of course, and they include some fine things. There is a beautiful Nattier, the group of Bouchers is interesting, and there are delightful pieces by Fragonard, Pater and Perronneau. The judgment of the committee, which has aimed at illustrating the very spirit of the eighteenth century, is admirably reflected in its choice of the little drawing by Portail. It is in such souvenirs as this, quite as much as in the more formal paintings, that we apprehend the light, graceful atmosphere of the period. The Portail drawing is characteristic of the whole exhibition, which draws its strength no less from furniture and bibelots than from pictures and statuettes, from a trifle like a drawing as well as from a masterpiece by Clodion.

That life should be suave, charming, gay, luxurious, was the whole aim of the eighteenth century in France as it is disclosed in the works of her artists and craftsmen. There are some things in this exhibition which wake other thoughts, autographs of the two kings, and of Marie Antoinette, which set the historic imagination ranging, but the ensemble speaks simply of a great tradition of elegance. There was nothing that that tradition did not touch. One may see here practically everything filling the world, making the background of the exquisite personalities mirrored in the portraits. One may see the tapestries from eighteenth century walls, the chairs and tables from Parisian drawing rooms, the books, porcelains, fans, snuff boxes which made up the *frou-frou* of an incomparable period. Private collectors have lent freely of their treasures, and there are many precious rarities in the exhibition, works with alluring associations. But the point we would emphasize is the harmony established, the unity of style revealed. The French genius for order and for decorative perfection was never in such flawless flower as in the eighteenth century. This exhibition gives endless pleasure just in showing how life can be adorned, how artifice may wait upon utility to the end that beauty may prevail.

By invitation of the French government an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by American artists will be held in Paris next spring, probably in May and June, at the height of the season, in the galleries of the Luxembourg. The project was under consideration before the end of the war and has developed definitely since October last, when M. Alfred Cortot, representing the Minister of Public Instruction, M. Leferre, arrived in the United States with the orchestra of the Conservatoire. Prior to his arrival the scheme was the subject of correspondence between the French authorities and Mr. Ernest T. Rosen, an American artist resident in Paris until the last two or three years, which he has spent in this city. In October M. Cortot invited Mr. William A. Coffin, who has been conspicuously active in Franco-American artistic relations during the war, to form a committee, of which he should be president, this committee to select works for the projected exhibition and to take general charge of the undertaking. The committee having been promptly organized and several meetings held, its personnel may now be announced.

The list of officers is as follows: William A. Coffin, president; Herbert Adams, vice-president; Francis C. Jones, second vice-president and treasurer; Ernest T. Rosen, general secretary; Chauncey F. Ryder and Jonas Lie, committee secretaries. These gentlemen constitute the executive board. The remaining nine members of the committee are George Bellows, Edwin H. Blashfield, Arthur Crisp, Daniel Chester French, Robert Henri, Max Weber, J. Alden Weir, Irving R. Wiles and Mahonri Young. There will also be a number of honorary members, headed by M. Edouard de Billy, Deputy High Commissioner of France. This will include M. Henri Care-Delvaille, M. Ernest Guy, Robert W. de Forest, president of the Metropolitan Museum; M. Denys Amiel, editor of "The New France," and various other gentlemen.

The exhibition will be made up of about 100 paintings and about twenty figurines or small bronzes, busts and reliefs. The omission of large sculptures is explained by the difficulties involved just now in transportation. A few black and whites will be sent. Living artists only will be represented. A return exhibition of French art for next winter is contemplated, which will be shown not only in New York, but in many of the principal cities of the United States.

The Ehrich gallery presents a remarkably good little group of old masters, illustrating northern and southern schools. There are three Italian works. Salient in this section, if the mere weight of a name is to count, is the portrait attributed to Lotto; but as a matter of fact the finest of the Italian things is the small portrait by Giralamo Santa Croce, a brilliant bit of fifteenth century polish in draftsmanship and color. Next to this we would place the fine landscape by Guardi, an unusually beautiful example. The "Descent from the Cross," by Van Dyck, is an interesting sketch, infinitely more important than most of the portraits attributed to him which come our way. Among the several other works from the Low Countries there is a really stunning "Louis XIV on Horseback," by Van der Meulon, a decorative piece, handsomely painted. The big double portrait by Francis Cotes, "Mr. and Mrs. Joah Bates," which from its subject should appeal to students of English musical history, is an excellent specimen of this artist's formal but fluent manner.

One of the most noticeable of the current exhibitions of prints is that of more than two hundred French and English engravings at the Ralston gallery. The collection is strong in the British mezzotinters of the eighteenth century, plates after Reynolds and Gainsborough and their circle being conspicuous. Morland's charming designs, in the plates of Wood and others, are also to be cited. The French school is represented by many prints in color. At the Knoedler gallery the etchings and dry points of James McBey, the Scotchman, are shown, this being the fourth exhibition of his works at this gallery. The collection now displayed embraces his Scotch and Continental subjects, including the series dedicated to the Spanish bull ring, and the Moroccan set of thirteen plates. Half a dozen subjects drawn at the front in France are also presented.

It is interesting to note in the exhibition of wood engravings by Timothy Cole at the Hahlo gallery something more than his familiar work executed for the magazines. In the last two years or so he has produced a number of blocks independently, blocks on a larger scale than the periodical press permits. The Messrs. Hahlo have published seven or eight of these, translations of paintings by Ver Meer, Metsu, Turner and Millet. Mr. Cole has also engraved several American artists in this new series of his, landscapes by Inness, Blakelock and J. Francis Murphy and Sargent's portrait of President Wilson. His art has always possessed distinction. In these new plates it appears to finer advantage than ever.

Several collections will be placed on view at the American Art Galleries next Wednesday. The first, and largest, is that of Oriental porcelains and other souvenirs of the East brought together by the late Rufus E. Moore. This will be sold in seven afternoon sessions, beginning January 27. The other collections are all of pictures. There is one formed by the late Frank N. Lawrence, whose associations with the Grolier Club are well remembered. Then there are the paintings belonging to the estate of the late Alexander Morton, a body of works whose character was foreshadowed in his collection sold some time ago. Finally, the family of the late James Inglis is disposing of its works of art, works showing the influence of his remarkable taste. Altogether this triple array ought to prove of exceptional interest.

The Anderson Galleries will place on view to-morrow a collection of objects of art which are to be sold for the account of A. Mitchell Palmer, Alien Property Custodian. It will present at the same time books from the library of Herschel V. Jones, and on the 22d will display books from the library of the Architectural League. It begins on Wednesday the sale of the late Frederic R. Halsey's household furnishings, his paintings and miniatures, with additional items sold for the account of the Alien Property Custodian.

Carlton Fowler, whose exhibition of water colors is now on view in the Art Salon of the Majestic Hotel, has travelled in many lands to obtain his delightful impressions of odd corners and jewel-like landscapes. In Holland he catches the calm beauty of sea and sky relieved by brightly colored sails of fishing boats; in England he chooses the quaint "Bull Inn," with its old world charm of gabled roof and box hedges; but it is Italy, perhaps, that the artist has loved best of all, for he paints it in many moods, sunshine and shadow. "Lingering Light" is a poetic rendering of the Bridge of Sighs, Venice, painted low in tone. In contrast "The Doorway of Robert Browning's Palace" is a blaze of sunshine with brilliant flowers climbing over the old walls and balconies. One oil painting is included in the collection showing tall brown and gold tree trunks against the distant blue of the Berkshire Hills.

An exhibition of paintings by Zuloaga and George Luks is attracting much attention at the Kraushaar Galleries. The four full-length life size figures by Zuloaga with their brilliant color and bold design are somewhat overpowering in the small space in which they are shown, but one cannot but admire the force behind this artist's powerful portrayal of Spanish life. A striking canvas shows a famous bullfighter clad in a gorgeous emerald green cloak, standing on a balcony which overlooks a Spanish city characteristic only of Zuloaga's own beloved Granada. The three canvases by George Luks do not suffer in comparison; they also are strong pieces of work. His "Wrestlers" bend and strain in a mighty struggle and the "Old Woman with Macaws" looks out of the canvas with a Franz Hals-like irascibility. The exhibition will close January 27.

The third exhibition of hand decorated textiles is now hung in the galleries of the Art Alliance of America. Prizes totalling $750 have been awarded in the competition, which was organized by Albert Blum. Many of the exhibitors have gone to the East for their luxurious designs; others have attempted decorative figure scenes for their batik work, but as the fine material pulls and twists the result is sometimes distorted drawing and not always successful. The jury which awarded the prizes included W. G. Burt, M. D. C. Crawford, Edward L. Mayer, J. A. Migel and Miss J. F. Turner.

Miss Mary Prindeville, who is exhibiting a selected number of canvases at the Milch Galleries, paints in a decorative manner, using the simple outlines and flat tones of the Japanese to emphasize her decorative schemes of color. A large canvas shows three types, a blonde, a brunette and a negress. A negress painted against a red background is also a rather striking canvas, but it is in her flower studies that Miss Prindeville achieves her greatest charm in grace of line and blending of colors. Her seascape of the Maine coast is not quite convincing but is not lacking in decorative qualities. The exhibition will close January 25.

The Folsom Galleries opened their new and more spacious premises at 560 Fifth Avenue yesterday with a group exhibition by American painters. A charming landscape by the late Henry Golden Dearth occupies the place of honor. It is an early work, entitled "Springtime, Moonrise," and is filled with a wonder of delicate beauty. Slender birches pattern the landscape, emphasizing in their decorative blacks and whites the opalescent splendor in trees and sky. Jonas Lie shows a strong piece of work, "Driftwood." Gardner Symons has a characteristic winter scene, and two paintings by Albert Groll show the artist's sympathetic understanding and appreciation of the Far West in "Near Lugana, New Mexico," and "Sunset on the Desert, Arizona." Louis P. Dessar's "Silvery Moonlight" has the charm of the old masters in its luminous qualities and softened outlines. Other artists exhibiting are Walter Griffin, Willard Metcalf, Colin Cooper and Ben Foster.

Calendar of Exhibitions

Art Students' League, 215 West Fifty-seventh Street.—Drawings and cartoons by Boardman Robinson and Art Young; to January 25.
American Art Galleries, Madison Square South.—Rufus E. Moore collection of Oriental objects of art; from January 22 to 27, and paintings belonging to Miss Elizabeth Ingles, from January 22.
Anderson Galleries, Park Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street.—Objects of art and rare books from various collections.
Art Alliance of America, 10 East Forty-seventh Street.—Hand decorated textiles; to January 31.
Arlington Galleries, 274 Madison Avenue.—Selected American paintings; to February 1.
Babcock Galleries, 19 East Forty-ninth Street.—Paintings by Alexis Jean Fournier; to February 8.
Bonaventure Gallery, 601 Fifth Avenue.—Fourteenth century pastels and drawings, to February 3.
Bourgeois Gallery, 668 Fifth Avenue.—American sculptures; to February 1.
Daniel Galleries, 2 West Forty-seventh Street.—Paintings by Marsden Hartley; to January 28.
Durand Ruel Galleries, 12 East Fifty-seventh Street.—Paintings by Ricardo Canals; to January 22.
Ehrich Galleries, 707 Fifth Avenue.—Paintings by old masters; to January 31.
Folsom Galleries, 560 Fifth Avenue.—Group exhibition by American painters; to February 8.
Fine Arts Building, 215 West Fifty-seventh Street.—Allied Arts of America; to February 10.
Ferargil Gallery, 24 East Forty-ninth Street.—Oils by John Folinsbee; to February 1.
Gimpel & Wildenstein, 647 Fifth Avenue.—Memorial exhibition of paintings by Henry Golden Dearth; to January 30.
Hahlo Galleries, 569 Fifth Avenue.—Engravings by Timothy Cole; to January 31.
Kraushaar Galleries, 260 Fifth Avenue.—Paintings by Zuloaga and George Luks; to January 27.
Kleinberger Galleries, 725 Fifth Avenue.—Paintings by Jan V. Chelminski; to January 31.
Kennedy & Co., 613 Fifth Avenue.—Aquatints by Sherwood, water colors and etchings by Shears Gallagher.
Knoedler Galleries, 556 Fifth Avenue.—Etchings by James McBey, portraits by Louis Betts, exhibition of Persian art.
Majestic Hotel Art Salon.—Paintings by Carlton Fowler; to February 5.
Museum of French Art, 599 Fifth Avenue.—Loan exhibition of French art; to January 29.
Montross Galleries, 550 Fifth Avenue.—Modern American artists; to January 25.
Macbeth Galleries, 450 Fifth Avenue.—Paintings by John H. Twachtman; to January 29.
Milch Galleries, 108 West Fifty-Seventh Street.—Paintings by Mary Prindeville; to January 25.
National Arts Club, 19 East Nineteenth Street.—Retrospective exhibition of paintings by life members; to January 31.
Ralston Galleries, 567 Fifth Avenue.—Old English and French prints; to January 25.